

Tom Butler  
Etheric Studies, (CC)2018  
Seeking to Understand the Nature of Reality  
[ethericstudies.org](http://ethericstudies.org)

## Etheric Studies Occasional Update 4

Tom Butler, August 2019



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(Also at <https://mailchi.mp/a8a4f1cd6eff/etheric-studies-occasional-update-4>)

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I begin here with a friendly hello that quickly drifts into something of a rant about quality of life. During the proofread, I nearly removed it, but then, I realized that there is a sort of logic to including it here. The Mindful Way is all about habitually examining the implications of our thoughts and the consequences of our actions. It is not limited to things spiritual in the common sense. We are spiritual beings and our daily living is a consequence of our existence.

My comments here are about things for which we are each responsible and which we have the power to manage as stewards of this venue of learning. Look around your local reality. What in it requires your attention as an enlightened citizen?

### Summer!

We have a small birdbath on our deck ... found this young Redtail Hawk taking a bath a few days ago. Reno seasons are variable from year to year. Last year was very hot with 14 days over 100 Degrees in July. The valley has been full

of smoke from forest fires much of the last two summers. But this year, we have hit 100 Degrees only once so far and our air has been mostly clear



Surprisingly, air quality is a problem for Reno. We have a lot of people who think it is their God-given right to burn wood in the winter which often leads to frequent air quality alerts. Summer wildfires round out annual air quality to an average of *Moderate*. Air quality for us goes down as the fires increase—both wild and for heating.

The culprit is mostly particulates that get stuck in our lungs. They are microscopic and mostly a byproduct of burning wood and petroleum fuel. Here is some background from [Health and Environmental Effects of Particulate Matter \(PM\)](#):

*Exposure to such particles can affect both your lungs and your heart. Numerous scientific studies have linked particle pollution exposure to a variety of problems, including:*

- *premature death in people with heart or lung disease*
- *nonfatal heart attacks*
- *irregular heartbeat*
- *aggravated asthma*
- *decreased lung function*
- *increased respiratory symptoms, such as irritation of the airways, coughing or difficulty breathing.*

*People with heart or lung diseases, children, and older adults are the most likely to be affected by particle pollution exposure.*

From [Wood Smoke Linked to COPD and Asthma](#):

*A great deal of studies have pretty much confirmed the link between wood smoke and respiratory diseases like asthma and COPD. As a matter of fact, wood smoke may trigger asthma attacks and COPD flare-ups, and it may also cause asthma and COPD, just like cigarette smoke does.*

*Studies have also linked inhaling wood smoke with:*

- *Small birth weight, which has also been linked to asthma and to COPD*
- *Respiratory infections like pneumonia, which may trigger asthma and COPD*
- *Lower respiratory tract infections in children, including pneumonia and bronchiolitis, which are also linked with the development of lung disease later in life*
- *Increased incidence of strokes and heart problems*
- *Eye disease, as smoke also irritates cells lining your eyes*
- *Cancer, such as lung cancer*
- *Headaches*

We can't do much about the lightning-caused fires, but depending on whose data we use, we could eliminate 60% to 80% of the forest and rangeland fires in Northern Nevada by keeping people out of the forest. As I remember, a smoking ban while driving through fire-prone areas was successfully implemented in Southern California when I was stationed there. Fireworks are illegal, even though they can be legally sold on reservations (not a good neighbor policy). Campers cause a few fires but that can be moderated with education and restricted camping facilities.

[We need to keep the forest open to public use. That means helping people camp safely and keeping that guy in the next camp from setting off fireworks or target practicing. Taxpayers pay for a lot of safe fire pots and safe campsites for campers.](#)

The real culprit is target shooting. About 40% of our fires are caused by target shooters. Sure, to paraphrase the gun lobby, it is not the gun's fault how it is used. But, since we can't ban the people, the next best thing is to take away their toys. I just got in a pissing match with a gun advocate who indicated it is his right to own an assault rifle. Darkly, insanely, he suggested a willingness to shoot anyone who might try. Can you say, "domestic terrorist"?

This is not the place to argue the merits of his contention. I think the practical solution is not to ban guns or fireworks or wood-burning stoves. There is a cost to society for which those claiming such rights are not being held accountable. Just as a carbon tax could fairly compensate society for damage caused by polluters, so a tax commiserates with the cost to society for woodburning and gun ownership might establish the true cost of such supposed "rights." I am thinking a \$1,000 per bullet and \$10,000 per cord of wood to go into a victim's relief fund.

The bottom line of this little rant is that life is good in Reno, but things need a little more personal responsibility to protect our good life.

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## Extra Terrestrials Visual ITC study

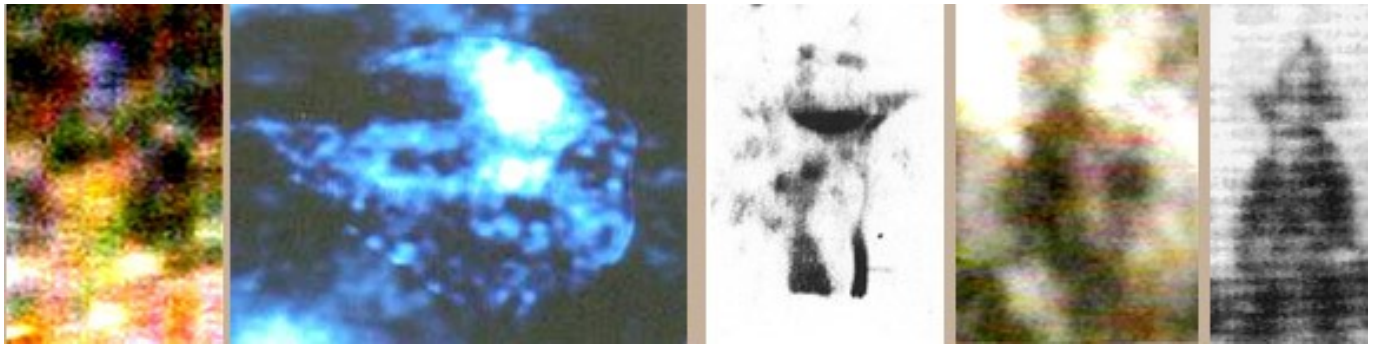
Lisa and I will attend the [Annual International UFO Congress](#) in Phoenix, AZ this year. The only other UFO conference we have attended was the 1997 UFO Congress in Laughlin, Nevada. That is the one at which a fake NASA scientist named Lee Shargel told the attendees that NASA had identified the presence of a [UFO hiding in the tail of the incoming Hale-Bopp Comet](#). That was all the proof needed by the Heaven's Gate cult. As I remember, they killed themselves so as to be "taken up" by the aliens.

Our interest in the UFO phenomenon moved to the back burner when we assumed leadership of the ATransC, but now that we no longer publish the NewsJournal, we have more time for other interests. The recent flap over the [Navy's encounter with UFOs off the coast of Southern California](#) has renewed our interest.

[Before I get to my point, I would like you to consider that it is feasible the entire Navy UFO encounter was a virtual reality exercise. The UFOs were detected on radar in digital form. That information was digitally conveyed to the pilots who were launched to intercept the UFOs. The pilots digitally "saw" the UFO via their high-tech helmets. It is possible that the entire "sighting" was placed in the Navy's computers as an unannounced war game. With our current digital war with Russia and China, is it possible one of them is testing their ability to misdirect our efforts on the battlefield? In fact, I do not know enough about the event to reasonably speculate, but it is interesting to note the amount of actual "live" interaction with the UFOs.](#)

## Call for Examples

Over the years, we have gathered a small number of Visual ITC examples that are suggestive of ETs, some of which, we have recorded. The examples below will give you a sense of what we had.



**Possible Aliens:** Video-loop examples that seem to be of alien people. From the left, blue-faced man (recorded by Butler), Gremlin (©Jose Garrido and Alfonso Galeano), possibly same gremlin species (©Erland Babcock), apparent grasshopper-like being (Butler), possible troll (Butler). The background has been suppressed to make the troll more apparent. Some adjustments in contrast and color intensity in the three we recorded.

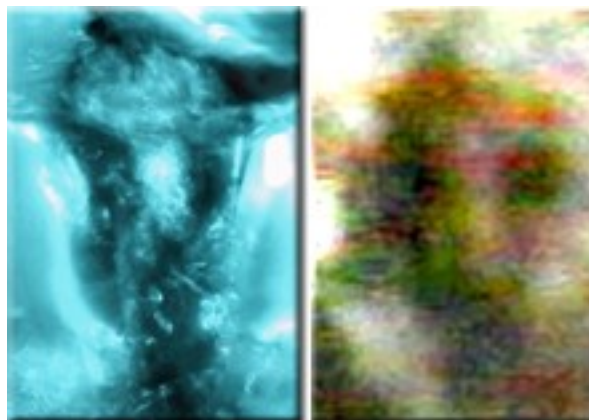
Because of the renewed interest in UFOs, and because more people are recording for visual ITC, we decided it was time to begin a study to determine if a reasonable argument can be made that some visual ITC examples depict life forms that have not evolved on this planet. The [ET Visual ITC Study is explained on ATransC.org](https://www.ATransC.org). The examples already submitted by practitioners are attached to that page.

### Possible Benefits

Here are the objectives of the study:

1. Can the majority of a grading panel agree that an example submitted by practitioners is paranormal?
2. Will the panel agree that an example is more likely to be extraterrestrial than earthling?
3. Will more than one example of the same species be collected?
4. If so, will there be sufficient information to develop a trend suggesting they are part of a race of beings?
5. Will contactees recognize any of the species?
6. Using examples from such a race, is it possible to request their presence in our visual ITC or EVP sessions?

Given our present level of understanding, it is probably unreasonable to try to develop more information about the examples, but we are not trying to prove the existence of ETs. The main focus is on pushing the frontier a little further out as we seek to understand who we are finding in our sessions.



Here are two examples with apparent faces, seemingly from the same species. The one on the left was recorded by Margaret Downy using the light reflected from moving water technique. Lisa and I recorded the one on the right using the video-loop technique.

Both techniques distort apparently intended features. For instance, the moving water technique tends to twist the feature. When examining such an example, it is useful to extrapolate a little to account for such distortion. Moving water seems to suppress most of the visible frequencies, making apparent skin color more an artifact than actual. A benefit of the moving water technique is that it can be done with a high-resolution camera, potentially making details more evident.

The video-loop technique is usually much lower resolution, making it hard to distinguish details. However, the frequencies are usually present, making true skin color possible. For instance, the blue-faced man in the montage probably actually has a blue-faced.

With these considerations, when merged, is there enough information in the two examples to say if they are of the same race? Can we say they are not human but of this planet? We are considering asking a sketch artist to help us do the merge.

The idea of the study is to see if we can attract more examples that seem to be part of the same species. We do not know how much more we can make of them than to say that there is a trend. Time and more understanding will guide us in the next steps.

For now, you are invited to send us your possible ET examples. Tell your practitioner friends. We need to reach more people.

Thanks!

## PDF Version of Your Immortal Self

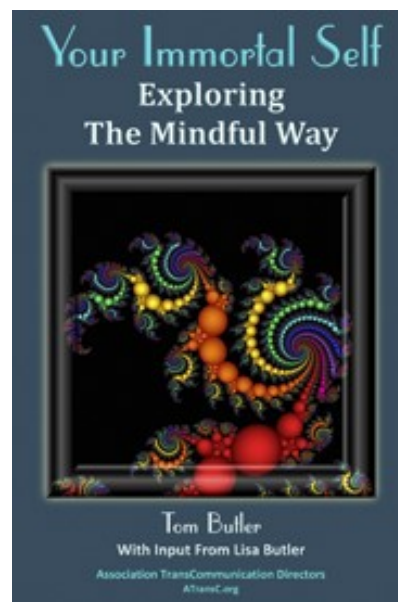
I write to communicate ideas. That is why you will see both internal and external links to other sources of information in my writing. Since I am trying to communicate ideas, I visualize my reader as one who wants to understand the ideas and is willing to do the work to follow the links so as to learn more ... and to see that I am reporting as much as explaining. I really don't make this stuff up. ☺

A web page is a wonderful canvas for a technical writer. By now, I have addressed enough subjects that I can simply link to previous essays to further explain a point. The world is a link away, making it possible for me to have other writers explain points for me. I can include pictures and sounds. (I think videos are the poorest media for communicating ideas.) There are two hundred reference in Your Immortal Self.

The two books I recently wrote, *Your Immortal Self* and *Exploring the Mindful Way* are formatted in the manner of a web page. The problem is that the paperback version does not support links. Following the references is clumsy and I doubt many people will do the work. The eBook version is much better, but personally, I get lost in them and find it difficult to develop a clear picture of the exposition. PDF documents tend to be better if they are made from well-formatted text files.

The book marketing industry does not support PDF formatted book, partially because they are difficult to secure, and usually being based on an 8.5" x 11' format, few readers have the large screen to avoid needing to slide the digital page around to read all of the text. As an experiment, I have formatted Your Immortal Self as a PDF book using the 6" x 9" page that should be readable on most small readers. It is **only** available at Lulu.com. The book page is <http://www.lulu.com/shop/tom-butler/your-immortal-self/ebook/product-24207442.html>.

Please let me know if you try the book and how you like the format. As always, I am looking for reviews. The good ones help sell the book, but the bad ones teach me, so honest reviews are important.



## Shadetree Psychologist

I arrived at the idea of the [Cooperative Community Organizing Principles](#) to help me make sense of the influence of cultural contamination in how we develop awareness. I define it as: *Personalities are attracted to communities of like-minded people cooperating to facilitate progression*. In effect, we inherit a sort of Prime Imperative to gain



understanding about the nature of reality. At least in the physical, this is accomplished by learning through experience. A community of likeminded people facilitates such learning if the people are interactive.

The process of formulating our thought to talk ... about anything ... helps us organize our worldview and focus our intention. By speaking, we learn what we are thinking. With feedback, we gain a sense of the reasonableness of what we think is true. The process is ongoing as we converge on understanding and should be considered a life-long habit rather than an occasional interaction.

**Why this matter** – Important emerging understanding destined to change the way we think about paranormal phenomena, and transcommunication in particular, is that our mostly [unconscious mind is always telling us a story](#). That is one of the drivers for the [hyperlucidity concept](#). In practice, we are not good observers, we too often arrive at untenable conclusions and we are resistant to change once we make up our mind. By habitually examining our thoughts and actions (Mindful Way) and sharing our point of view with others in an interactive way, we are more able to distinguish our internal nonsense from reasonable thought.

Cooperative communities can take many forms. A post on Facebook is just information. If we develop a thought concerning that post, it becomes a stimulus for our thinking. However, it is only when we post a comment in response that Facebook becomes a cooperative community. A well-considered comment provides powerful feedback to the person who is making the comment.

All of this has inspired me to redefine the Golden Rule for myself from “*Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*” to “*Teach me as I teach you.*”

## Sharing Lessons Learned

The paranormalist community represents our best tool for personal growth, but the best use of this tool is something of a craft. I have learned, usually the hard way, that some behaviors are more constructive than others. Here are a few that are on my mind today.

**No joke** -- Often, simply posting a comment to a forum is not communicating. It is the difference between talking with and talking at. For instance, a flippant remark is seldom well-considered, and therefore, serves only to stop communication. That is the point. *Well-considered*, means purposeful.

**Reciprocity** – The idea of balanced exchange of service is seen as the Natural Law of Reciprocity. Because the urge for fairness is so deeply ingrained in our human instincts, it is a potent influence in commerce.

Each decision we make that concerns others, has the potential to involve reciprocity. Ask someone to do something, and their hindbrain will go to work figuring out if you have been fair with them. While discerning Intellect is altruistic, few of us are so mature that it is able to override our human instinct to dominate. The result is that the fair equation is always a factor.

Meaningfulness is another way of expressing this. For instance, part of my decision to support a person or organization is how meaningful the organization become for me. I live on the layperson side of the Academic-Layperson Partition. I am a member of three parapsychology organizations because I want to keep an eye on them, but since I do not have a Ph.D., they will never allow me to be more than an associate member. Certainly, they will never give my words the credibility they give to a retired Ph.D. in basket weaving. (yes, I have a thing about it.) I support a less academic organization because I think it might speak to our lay-community. But when I see that it numbers only academic organizations in its Community,” I begin to think my loyalty is misplaced.

I use Grammarly and receive monthly reports claiming I am a most prolific writer. While that is fun, it is noteworthy how few times I see my work referenced ... anywhere. As I have said, writing is what I do, but can you see how my sense of fairness might influence my decisions about what people or groups I support?

I am using myself as an example, but it is in all of our best interest to remember that reciprocity has a potent influence on our social decisions.

**Personal reputation** – This is the end product of our actions. One who too frequently posts flippant comments will be seen as unreliable and untrustworthy. Comments by one whose posts have frequently proven to be meaningful will be given more attention. The converse of that is true.

**Expectation management** – I learned the importance of expectation management early in my working years. Today, I know that if I post in a science forum, I need to remember that others in the forum will expect that I have the

credentials to speak on the subject. Proper expectation management on my part is to say up front if I am speaking out of my field. When someone wants to be friends in Facebook, I look to their page to see why. When I comment on a “friend’s post, I assume I am commenting amongst people open to the paranormal.

Poor expectation management is a problem with people speaking to our community under academic authority of a Ph.D., but who in fact, have no academic training in the subject or direct experience. Doing so is dishonest and potentially harmful. One form of this intellectual sleight of hand is the research report titled in a way suggesting it is intended to further our understanding of phenomena, when in fact, it is intended to show that belief in such phenomena is being delusional. The expectation is made more misleading when it is published by a supposedly positive parapsychological journal without editorial advice to the reader.

People are probably not deliberately dishonest with their communication. I think the problem is mostly their failure to consider the implications of their actions. Since it is so prevalent, the antidote seems to be for us, the witnesses, to be a little more candid in our feedback and for us to practice discernment.

**Credibility by association** – We inherit reputation from people with whom we associate. If we are seen as associating with anti-humanist people, it will be assumed that we are anti-humanist or at least support that cause in some way. If we associate with ITC practitioners, it will be assumed that we endorse the phenomena as actual.

I inherit a degree of credibility as a co-director of the ATransC. That means I have the responsibility to represent the Association in the best light. Doing so has been especially challenging because our objective to “*Provide Objective Evidence That We Survive Death in an Individual Conscious State*” (Sarah Estep) required that we presented supported evidence or that we be clear about how it was not supported.

Being mindful that credibility can be inherited from association with credible people, or inducement from credible people, it has seemed necessary to either not talk about some things, take sides when it seemed best for the community and carefully explain current theory.

Be careful not to confuse your sense of truth with your credibility in the eyes of others. Your truth will evolve as you gain understanding. Looking back, you may realize that things you have said and done a few years ago might look silly today. Yet, your credibility is probably based on that earlier truth. Learn to speak in terms of “it seems to me” rather than “it is.”

## Appeal to Improper Authority

This subject has come up before. People who want to be in the middle of whatever paranormal is happening sometimes try to seem more knowledgeable than they are. I mostly encounter this behavior amongst people who support science and want to be seen as being close to science. A tell is when someone claims associate Membership in a parapsychological organization as a credential. Another is asserting ideas, for which the person clearly has little understanding, as fact.

My personal millstone is being told how great someone else’s ideas are as if I had none. I have demonstrated a reasonable degree of understanding about these subjects. Certainly, I have written a lot. When it is examined, my work has been well received as answering important questions. (In truth, I explain the answers more than answer the questions.)

So, I am frustrated when someone who should be aware of my writing, books and ideas literally ignore my work in favor of another person’s work. This experience is not unique to me. I see it happening in many forums. The effect is discounting a present, familiar resource in favor of a new, perhaps more exciting one.

In an attempt to understand this behavior, I am preparing to write an essay with the title something like “*The Problem with Experts*.” For it, I am trying to describe a complex of behavior that I believe amounts to a behavior syndrome. Not wanting to coin one, I would like your help finding the right term.

The major elements of the syndrome I am trying to name include:

1. Tendency to assume greater understanding without direct experience than those who have direct experience.
2. Expressing agreement with a person trying to explain a complex concept but then ignoring what was said.
3. Preferring “sounds good” and fantastical theories over empirically supported ones.

4. A variation of the “sounds good” preferred *truth* is the inclination to seek a “silver bullet,” easy way to produce, experience and witness phenomena.
5. General disregard for proven expertise.
6. Trust the word of a Ph.D. over a layperson, even though the layperson may have direct experience and the Ph.D. is trained in an unrelated field (Wizard of Oz Syndrome).

As it turns out, there is a well-defined system of thought concerning logical thinking. For instance, [Logical Fallacies Handlist](#) has listed fallacious arguments under the categories of *Fallacies of Relevance*, *Component Fallacies*, *Fallacies of Ambiguity*, and *Fallacies of Omission*. The one that seems relevant to this discussion is (quoting):

**Appeal to Improper Authority** (*Argumentum Ad Verecundum*, literally “argument from that which is improper”): (Note that “appeal” is used to mean “I am using xxx as my authoritative source.”)

*An appeal to an improper authority, such as a famous person or a source that may not be reliable or who might not know anything about the topic. This fallacy attempts to capitalize upon feelings of respect or familiarity with a famous individual.*

*It is not fallacious to refer to an admitted authority if the individual’s expertise is within a strict field of knowledge. On the other hand, to cite Einstein to settle an argument about education or economics is fallacious....*

*A subcategory is the **Appeal to Biased Authority**. In this sort of appeal, the authority is one who actually is knowledgeable on the matter, but one who may have professional or personal motivations that render his professional judgment suspect: for instance, “To determine whether fraternities are beneficial to this campus, we interviewed all the frat presidents.” ...*

In this discussion, an *improper authority* is a person speaking about the subject as if that person is putting personal understanding based on indirect experience above a person who has direct experience. (Of course, the experimenter may be delusional but that requires consideration of other factors.)

Here is an example. I have spent a few years as a Wikipedia editor. I was involved as the skeptic majority established anti-pseudoscience, *paranormal* and *fringe* as official Wikipedia policy. I have written about the subject, including [Concerns with Wikipedia](#). My view is that people who use Wikipedia as a reference are intellectually naive and lazy. Yet, a person who knows this about me, and has no direct experience with Wikipedia editing, repeatedly includes Wikipedia as references in posts. He explicitly stated that he thinks it reasonable to discount my expertise in the subject. That is clearly the **Appeal to Improper Authority** logical fallacy.

It is important that I monitor my ego’s influence on how I write the essay. I think novices putting their understanding above others is a widespread problem. Certainly, I see it amongst parapsychologists. The phrase “Everyone is an expert” pretty much sums up the problem.

In survival metaphysics, Lucidity is defined as *the sense of a clear and open channel of awareness between the I think I am this (conscious self) and the true I am this intelligent core (personality)*. I define Hyperlucidity: *A short-term change in behavior marked by the tendency to find phenomena everywhere despite considerable testimony to the contrary by peers.*

The “hyper-” prefix means over or exaggerated. With that in mind, I have considered “**hyperexpert**” which would be defined as **a person who claims greater understanding than is in evidence; irrationally assumed intellectual authority**. The problem is that Googling *hyper* usually shows its use as *super* rather than exaggerated, so it is probably best not to use it.

*Appeal to Improper Authority* seems to be the term I need to use. A person who does so might be referred to as a *hyperexpert* or perhaps an *expertist*. I need to have a term with intuitively clear meaning. Any ideas?



## Essays

These are my recent efforts:

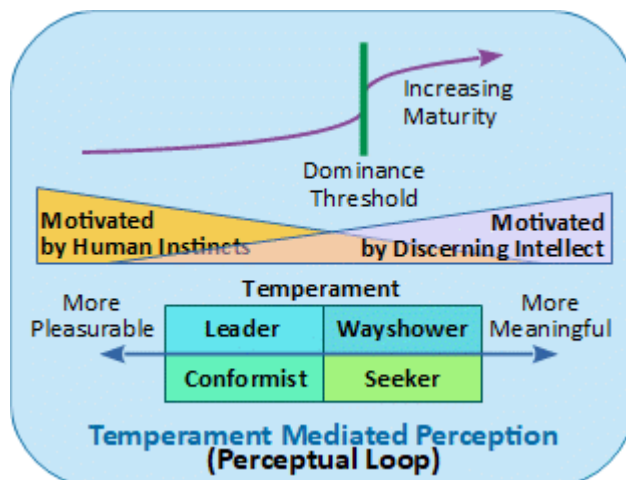
### Mind as Storyteller

#### Abstract

This Opinion includes introduction of the Temperament Mediated Perception (TMP) model. Although the first appearance with this title, the model has been evolving from the early version discussed in the Implicit Cosmology. As it stands now, I believe it is largely complete. Future writing will be concerned with explaining its implications. It should not be considered true until it is vetted by informed reviewers. (Watch [ethericstudies.org](http://ethericstudies.org) for updates.

In brief, TMP is the argument that our perception is passed to our conscious awareness by way of our mostly unconscious mind, influenced by human instincts and colored by learned expectation. The core perceptual process appears to be moderated by inherited temperament-related traits.

My intention in writing this Opinion is to explain the relationship between unconsciously sensed and consciously perceived information with emphasis on the need to consciously intend to see reality as it is, rather than how we are taught



### Seeking 101: The One Thing

#### Introduction

The need to consciously seek understanding about our spiritual nature, the nature of the reality we inhabit and our relationship with reality, has been known at least since the time of the Egyptian Hermes, some 6,000 years ago. Spiritualist know today that recognizing and understanding our actual nature and living in accordance with that understanding is the intent of religion. (Declaration of Principles, Number 3)



## Thank You

Writing these updates is a way for me to order my thinking. For that, I thank you for subscribing to this list. Remember that the [ATransC Idea Exchange](http://ATransC.org) remains available for questions, answers and comments. There are a few interesting posts on the forum since the last update.

I continue to answer questions on Quora. In the spirit of one person at a time, I bother because the questions give me the opportunity to clarify points and counter some really bad answers by people who ... well, people who *Appeal to Improper Authority*. You can see my past answers at <https://www.quora.com/profile/Tom-Butler-79>

Tom Butler

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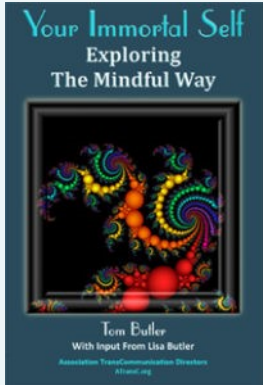
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## Your Immortal Self

Exploring the Mindful Way

[Book's dedicated web page](#)

### We Can Know the Nature of Reality



Our understanding of the nature of reality is undergoing an important shift from mostly supposition and belief to actionable facts based on important developments in parapsychology and transcommunication. This means the emergence of new tools which are helping us better understand our nature and the nature of the world we live in.

To be sure, this shift involves theory and research, but it ultimately comes down to who we are and what we can become. The best way to describe this future paradigm is in terms of mindfulness and the middle way of mindful living. This is not the mindfulness of living in the moment based on the belief that you are your body. It is the mindfulness of experiencing life from the perspective of your immortal self.

This book is written to show you the evidence of survival and the implications of that evidence as an important model for future research. While your personal progression depends a lot on understanding the evidence, the community sharing your journey is equally important. To help you learn where to look for help, a comprehensive survey of our paranormalist community is included.

Mindfulness can lead to important growth in your ability to work with nature, to sense the subtle fields influencing your life and more confidently commune with your loved ones on the other side. But it is important to understand how this paradigm shift is changing our understanding of the phenomena of transcommunication and interconnectedness in our community. The last part of this book includes a comprehensive discussion of the phenomena, including EVP-ITC, healing intention and mediumship transcommunication phenomena.

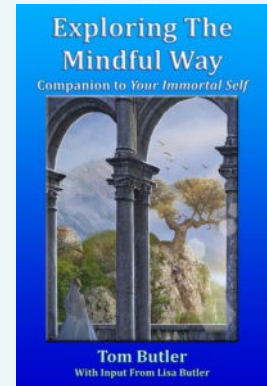
## Exploring the Mindful Way

Companion to *Your Immortal Self*

[Book's dedicated web page](#)

### Immortal Self-Centric Mindfulness

The most important understanding seekers of spiritual maturity must come to is the difference between lucidity and hyperlucidity. Lucidity is the degree to which we are able to clearly sense information from our mostly unconscious mind. Hyperlucidity is a term used in the Implicit Cosmology for a complex of behaviors motivated by the belief we are lucid when we are actually only sensing what we have been taught to expect.



The second most important understanding is that lucidity is the seeker's objective, but that it is achieved in small steps. The only real conscious influence we have on our mostly unconscious mind is the expression of intention. This means that we must learn to consciously examine what we think is true. Mind changes only slowly, and so, the seeker's objective is to habitually express the intention to align perception with the actual nature of reality.

In the first book, *Your Immortal Self*, the process of consciously seeking greater lucidity is referred to as the Mindful Way. Many people practice mindfulness simply to improve personal wellbeing. A few step onto the Mindful Way to seek greater understanding of their immortal nature and the nature of the reality they inhabit. Even fewer remain as wayshowers for those who seek greater lucidity.

The fact of our immortality is explained in *Your Immortal Self*. This book, *Exploring the Mindful Way*, includes twenty-one essays explaining some of the more important concepts encountered on the Mindful Way. While you will benefit from first reading *Your Immortal Self*, there are sufficient explanations in this book to make it a stand-alone text.

Will you be a wayshower?